

Introducing the ‘Scan Every Patient’ Protocol: How one dental practice is driving case acceptance and new workflows by starting every patient appointment with a digital intraoral scan.

Dr. Milad Shadrooh, aka "The Singing Dentist", is undergoing something of a transformation - one that sees his practice evolving by implementing a Scan Every Patient protocol (SEP). The evolution is paying off; he's witnessing progress across multiple areas of the practice, from enhanced patient communication and streamlined clinic workflows to greater practitioner and team satisfaction, and ultimately, stronger practice income.

Dr. Shadrooh focuses predominantly on cosmetic dentistry, including composite bonding, porcelain veneers, and more recently 3D-printed veneers. As a precursor to these restorative treatments the practice introduced tooth alignment with the Invisalign® system. It was this focus that led to the adoption of digital scanning with the iTero™ imaging system – initially for data capture in preparation for both restorative and orthodontic treatments.

As Dr. Shadrooh explained: "I have been practicing since 2004, and had previously used other scanners. Our switch to the iTero scanner took place when we became aware of the launch of Invisalign Smile Architect software for ortho-restorative planning. I was involved with piloting the digital smile design software and we were keen to put it through its paces. Align had made significant investments in R&D, and we could see the scanning technology was evolving at a rate of knots. It was therefore an easy decision to transition to the iTero scanner for us."

The ‘Scan Every Patient’ Protocol.

Having heard other practitioners extol the benefits of scanning every patient, Dr. Shadrooh adopted this workflow protocol. "As soon as you begin scanning everyone, they begin to see their dental issues for themselves. This allows for better conversations - and seeing is very much believing. For me, chatting to patients comes easily and naturally, but for less experienced associates initiating a discussion with patients can sometimes be challenging. The iTero scanner has changed that by giving them a starting point for every conversation - because patients can see their challenges on the screen for themselves it prompts them to ask questions."

Dr. Shadrooh's general practice is supported by four associate dentists, a hygienist and dental nurses, treating patients of all generations. It was one of his associates, Dr. Ploy Intawong who first fully embraced the concept of

scanning every patient to enhance her dialogue with them. She really likes the fact that scanning patients enables an element of 'co-diagnosis'; that is showing them their scans on a screen and allowing them to 'discover' their oral health issues, ask questions and engage in conversations about potential treatment options.

"From a patient perspective, they may have never had a scan before. But they're seeing things for themselves for the first time and saying 'Wow, this is cool. What is this technology?'" Says Dr. Shadrooh and he leverages the iTero scanner's 'wow' factor by telling patients how much the scanner costs, which he believes demonstrates his investment in their care. He starts the conversation showing them the results of the iTero NIRI technology (Near Infra-Red Imaging) alongside x-rays to help patients understand their oral health, after which many of the tools in the Align™ Oral Health Suite are utilised as the diagnosis and planning process progresses.



Dr. Milad Shadrooh

Dr. Shadrooh qualified in 2004 from Barts and The London and he has worked at Chequers Dental ever since. His main interests are in cosmetic dentistry,

treating with composite and porcelain veneers and Invisalign clear aligner therapies for his patients. He is also a trainer for Avant Garde which offers training in the latest cutting edge dental techniques and technologies.

Outside of dentistry, music is his main passion, and he has combined this with dentistry to hit the headlines as "The Singing Dentist", with his educational and very entertaining dental parody songs. As a result, he has gained a huge following on social media with his online videos gaining over 250 million views combined. He has also transitioned onto mainstream TV, establishing himself as the go to media clinician with appearances on This Morning, Good Morning Britain, Lorraine, Steph's Packed Lunch, BBC News, Sky News and countless radio stations.

He has written for and been written about in numerous publications and has been voted into the Top 50 Most Influential people in Dentistry for the last 6 years. He has also recently had his first book "The Whole Tooth" published and released.

"It's so impressive being able to show patients a 3D image of their teeth. I think all clinics need to have scanners now."

Associate Dr. Intawong agrees but reflects on the early challenges of introducing the 'Scan Every Patient' concept: "When I was first asked to scan every patient at every appointment, I'll be honest - it felt like a bit of a stretch. Even with a twenty-minute appointment, it was hard to imagine how the scan would fit in without rushing or running behind. I kept thinking, 'This sounds great in theory, but is it actually realistic day to day?'. Despite her early concerns she, and the practice, have seen tangible benefits from adopting the protocol.

Treatment Uptake - Examining The Evidence.

As a result of the new Scan Every Patient (SEP) protocol, case acceptance has risen, leading to a positive financial impact for both the associates and the practice. Analysing the data shows that there has been a marked increase in both the number and value of treatments since the practice started scanning every patient.

- **Statistic 1 (Fig. 1):** The practice reviewed Dr. Intawong's, earnings in the 7 months before implementing the SEP protocol and compared them with the 7 months after its introduction. By averaging Dr. Intawong's monthly earnings before and after implementing the SEP protocol, they observed a 35% increase in her earnings in the 7 months following the introduction of the 'scan every patient' protocol.
- **Statistic 2 (Fig. 2):** The practice compared Dr. Intawong's earnings with those of other associates who didn't scan every patient. In the 7 months before implementing the SEP protocol, Dr. Intawong earned, on average, 20% less than Associate 1 and 18% less than Associate 2. In the 7 months following the introduction of the 'scan every patient' protocol, Dr. Intawong's earnings increased significantly, with her earning 65% more than Associate 1 and 24% more than Associate 2.
- **Statistic 3:** The practice analysed Dr. Intawong's earnings with one specific patient. She examined the patient and identified the need for a full mouth rehabilitation. The options were explained and the patient was presented with a treatment plan worth £14,000. The patient did not proceed at that time. The next examination took place six months later, which was after the implementation of the SEP protocol. Dr. Intawong scanned the patient's teeth and revisited the same treatment plan. This time, using the scan to educate and show the patient the issues, the patient decided to proceed with the £14,000 treatment plan, despite no changes in their personal circumstances.

Difference in Dr. Intawong's earnings from 7 months before & 7 months after implementing Scan Every Patient (SEP)	35% increase
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Fig. 1 Dr. Intawong's earnings increase before and after implementing SEP Protocol

Dr. Shadrooh comments that "Of course, you could argue that there may have been other factors which made the patient convert 6 months later, but scanning was absolutely a major contributory factor without question." He adds "I was more than pleasantly surprised once I reviewed the figures

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and I can confidently say the 'Scan Every Patient protocol' absolutely works! So much so, I would like to name it "The SEP Protocol" - Scan Every Patient... let's start a movement!

Some principals may hesitate at the initial expense of buying an iTero scanner, but Dr. Shadrooh points out, "The figures after adopting the 'SEP Protocol' add up and speak for themselves. Not only is the scanner a tax-deductible investment, but the cost can also be spread over time, and it will more than pay for itself – particularly if you are using it for big smile makeovers, such as implant and Invisalign treatments."

Dr. Intawong's earnings compared to other Associates	Associate 1	Associate 2
In 7 months before SEP	20% less	18% less
In 7 months after implementing SEP	65% more	24% more

Fig. 2 Dr. Intawong's earnings compared to other Associates before and after implementing SEP Protocol

A Whole Team Approach.

Such has been the success of the SEP protocol that the practice has introduced another iTero scanner, allowing all associates to scan without having to move one device between rooms. Dr. Shadrooh says "Having a scan allows the dentists to build up a rapport and chat with the patient right from the start, as opposed to immediately sticking a mirror in their mouth. You get your team to do the scanning, so you can be the person to engage in informed conversation with them." He adds, "We want our nurses to feel more empowered and part of the process. Medical surgeons operate like this – they don't start and finish a whole operation. They have a whole team approach, so why not bring this to dentistry?"

Dr. Intawong explains that it takes time to get to grips with the SEP concept. "At the start when I was still getting to grips with using the iTero scanner confidently, and I didn't want to look unsure in front of patients. Plus, not everyone was coming in for cosmetic work or Invisalign treatment, so I did wonder whether it might feel unnecessary - or even a bit pushy. It was a bit overwhelming at times. I found myself explaining what I was doing while scanning, almost narrating it as I went - possibly convincing myself as much as the patient. However, in hindsight, this approach actually helped open up the conversation. It gave me the chance to highlight things I was noticing in real time, and helped the nurse know what needed to be charted on the records. Once patients saw the scan results, it was a complete game changer. Seeing their own mouth in 3D shifted the whole tone of the appointment - they started asking questions, and suddenly it became a much more collaborative experience."

The scanner has completely transformed how patients engage during their appointments. When they see a 3D image of their own mouth - especially

side-by-side with an older scan - it shifts the entire conversation. They become more aware of issues like wear, crowding, gum recession, and cracked or broken restorations.

When shown, they can actually see the cracks which have formed around their old amalgam fillings, and it makes explaining the risks so much easier. It's no longer just me telling them - they're seeing it for themselves, unprompted. It takes the pressure off me having to convince them - they get it.

It's also opened the door to more holistic conversations, especially with patients who have worn dentition. The scan helps them understand that it's not just about fixing one broken tooth with a filling. We can zoom out and look at the bigger picture - why that tooth broke, how their bite is functioning, and what long-term solutions might be more appropriate. They start to understand how everything works together, and that leads to much more comprehensive and meaningful treatment planning.

Because the scan gives us something visual and interactive to talk through, it's helped me build rapport with patients much quicker. They feel listened to, more involved, and - most importantly - they trust the process. The whole appointment becomes more collaborative, and that really changes how treatment is received.

Teamwork is Crucial and Practice Makes Perfect.

The key to successfully scanning every patient lies in thorough training and practice. Dr. Shadrooh implemented training days which include both in-house and iTero™-led training allowing his team members to become familiar with the technology by scanning each other. He acknowledges "There's a learning curve for those new to scanning, plus, on his part, the need to trust and relinquish some control as the new protocols become part of the practice workflows. You need to be efficient with your workflows, but in the long run it will make everything much smoother because it empowers everyone, and you can focus on what you do best."

"First and foremost, you need to ensure you have enough time to

implement this change. If that means adding an extra five minutes to a fifteen-minute appointment, do it, because that extra five minutes per patient will pay dividends in the long run. Inform patients about their new appointment experience beforehand via an email or newsletter so that they know what to expect and why that extra five minutes will make all the difference to them".

Dr. Intawong adds "I was also initially unsure whether our nurse would be on board with the new protocol. However, we'd both completed a patient pathway course, which made a huge difference. It meant we had a shared understanding from the start, laying the foundation not just clinically, but also in how we communicate with patients and build scanning naturally into the patient journey. It gave me clarity and confidence around why we were doing this, which made it much easier to explain to patients without it feeling awkward.

From a practical side, we did run late when we first started scanning every patient. But after a few weeks and performing multiple scans, everything started to flow more smoothly and we got on track with timings. It really just came down to practice and repetition. The support from my nurse was a complete game-changer. Once we found our rhythm, she instinctively knew when to set up, how to position the scanner, and how to keep things moving without me needing to say a word. It stopped being something I had to manage on my own and became a proper team workflow. The more we did it, the faster and more seamless it became.

Having a principal who was fully behind the process also made a big difference. There was no pressure to rush or skip steps - it was clear this was about long-term value for the patient and delivering the kind of care we believe in as a practice."

Overall, the SEP has made my job so much easier. I honestly couldn't work without an iTero scanner now." Dr. Intawong concludes.

Dr. Shadrooh wholeheartedly concurs. In fact, such has been the success of the Scan Every Patient protocol that the practice has invested in a second iTero scanner.

For more information about the iTero Digital Scanner, please visit www.itero.com.
